



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Alaska Region
Tongass National Forest
Thorne Bay Ranger District

P.O. Box 19001
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File Code: 1950
Date: November 25, 2015

Dear Interested Individuals, Organizations, and Agencies:

I am pleased to announce that the final Environmental Assessment (EA) and draft Decision Notice (DN) for the Kosciusko Vegetation Management and Watershed Improvement Project (Kosciusko Project) on the Thorne Bay Ranger District of Tongass National Forest is available for your review. The EA and DN are attached. Additional copies are available for review at the Thorne Bay Ranger District Office and online at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/R10/Tongass/Kosciusko>. The draft DN documents my intention to select Alternative 3 and the facts considered in reaching my decision.

Under the Objection Process at 36 CFR 218, the public will be notified of the availability of the draft DN through a legal notice published in the newspaper of record, the Ketchikan Daily News, and the date of that legal notice will initiate a 45-day objection filing period. For more information on how the objection process works for projects and the requirements, you may read the regulations under 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B on the National Forest Service web site at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-03-27/pdf/2013-06857.pdf>. A copy of the legal notice will also be posted on the Forest Service project website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/R10/Tongass/Kosciusko>.

Objections will only be accepted from those who have previously submitted specific written comments regarding the proposed project during scoping or other designated opportunity for public comment in accordance with 36 CFR 218.5(a). Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted timely, specific written comments regarding the proposed project unless based on new information arising after the designated comment opportunities.

Objections, including attachments, must be filed via mail, fax, email, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays) to: Reviewing Officer M. Earl Stewart, Tongass Forest Supervisor, 648 Mission Street, Ketchikan, AK 99901, FAX: (907) 228-6215, or submitted electronically to: objections-alaska-tongass@fs.fed.us. Electronically filed objections may be submitted by email in word (.doc), rich text format (.rtf), text (.txt), and hypertext markup language (.html).

Objections must be submitted within 45 calendar days following the publication of a legal notice in the Ketchikan Daily News. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. Those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. The regulations prohibit extending the time to file an objection.

At a minimum, an objection must include the following (36 CFR 218.8(d)):

- 1) The objector's name and address, with a telephone number, if available;



- 2) A signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for email may be filed with the objection);
- 3) When multiple names are listed on an objection, identification of the lead objector (verification of the identity of the lead objector shall be provided upon request);
- 4) The name of the proposed project, the name and title of the Responsible Official, and the name(s) of the National Forest(s) and/or Ranger District(s) on which the proposed project will be implemented;
- 5) A description of those aspects of the proposed project addressed by the objection, including specific issues related to the proposed project if applicable, how the objector believes the environmental analysis or draft decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy; suggested remedies that would resolve the objection; supporting reasons for the reviewing officer to consider; and
- 6) A statement that demonstrates connection between prior specific written comments on the particular proposed project or activity and the content of the objection.

Incorporation of documents by reference is permitted only as provided in 36 CFR 218.8(b). It is the objector's responsibility to ensure timely filing of a written objection with the reviewing officer pursuant to 36 CFR 218.9. All objections are available for public inspection during and after the objection process.

If we receive objections during the established objection filing periods, a 45-day review period will begin during which time the Reviewing Officer, the Responsible Official, and any objectors may meet in order to resolve concerns, with the goal of achieving a better, more-informed decision. The DN will be signed after any concerns and instructions identified by the Reviewing Officer in the objection response(s) have been addressed. A final decision on decisions subject to the objection process may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the objection filing period, if no objections are received (36 CFR 218.12(c)(2)).

Copies of this letter have been mailed to those people who expressed interest in the project through scoping, comments, consultation, or requests to be on the mailing list. For additional information, please contact Delilah Brigham, Interdisciplinary Team Leader and Project Lead, by phone at (907) 828-3232 or by email at dbrigham@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,



RACHELLE HUDDLESTON-LORTON
District Ranger

Enclosures: Kosciusko Project Final Environmental
Assessment, Draft Decision Notice